

Amendments to the Drawings:

Applicant has proposed amendments to drawing Figures 6 and 7 as required by the Examiner. Replacement sheets for Figures 6 and 7 are attached to this Amendment. Each of Figures 6 and 7 has been amended to include the legend – Prior Art – on the Figures.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,824,928 to Kumano et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection.

In independent claim 1, Applicant claims keys having an abutment portion provided inside side walls of the keys where the abutment portion has a lower end located at approximately the same height as lower ends of the side walls. Further, Applicant claims stoppers arranged under said keys for abutment of said side walls and said abutment portion of an associated one of said keys. Therefore, in Applicant's claimed invention, the key's side walls and the key's abutment portion abut an associated stopper. In Applicant's specification, the Applicant explains the benefit of this structure. (Please see at least Applicant's specification at page 11, line 26 – page 12, line 24). As the Examiner correctly notes, Figures 6 and 7 in Applicant's specification illustrate the prior art and its associated problems. As can be seen in Figure 7, in the prior art, only the lower ends of the left and right side walls 3d of the key 3 are abutted against the lower limit stopper 6b. The problems with this structure are also explained in Applicant's specification. (Please see at least Applicant's specification at page 3, lines 2 - 33). In this Amendment, Applicant has amended drawing Figures 6 and 7 as required by the Examiner.

In rejecting independent claim 1, the Examiner has cited to Figures 1 and 2 in Kumano for the feature of an abutment portion provided inside the key's

side walls where the abutment portion abuts a stopper. The Examiner stated that the abutment portion was shown in Figure 2 above stopper 52. The Examiner then argued that this abutment portion abutted stopper 52. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's argument that Kumano discloses an "abutment portion" (as identified by the Examiner) that abuts the stopper 52, or any other stopper.

As will be explained below, Applicant respectfully submits that even if the structure cited by the Examiner in Kumano could be considered an abutment portion, it does not abut stopper 52, nor any other "stopper". In fact, neither Figures 1 or 2 show the structure cited by the Examiner that is above stopper 52 abutting the stopper 52 and, as will be explained, the keyboard apparatus of Kumano is not designed for this abutment to occur. Applicant notes that Figure 1 is a perspective view and does not show an abutting relationship between the structure cited by the Examiner and stopper 52. Also, Figure 2 clearly does not show an abutting relationship between the cited structure and stopper 52.

As shown in Kumano in Figures 1 and 2, the white keys are noted by reference numeral 20 and the black keys are noted by numeral 30. As can be clearly seen in the cross-section shown in Figure 2, a white key 20 is shown in cross-section. Therefore, the structure cited by the Examiner in Figure 2 above stopper 52 is associated with white key 20. As explained in Kumano at col. 8, lines 51 – 54, the white keys 20 can be prevented from vertical deformation thereof by engagement with the stopper 56 on the horizontal portion 14a of front

plate 14. (Please see also col. 4, lines 27 – 31). As is further explained in Kumano at col. 3, lines 55 - 60, the black keys 30 are restricted against downward movement by elongated stopper 52.

Therefore, in Kumano, white keys 20 (as shown in Figure 2), engage with stopper 56 and black keys 30 engage with stopper 52. As such, Applicant respectfully suggests that the structure of white key 20 cited by the Examiner for disclosing an abutment portion (above stopper 52 in Figure 2) does not abut with stopper 52, as was argued by the Examiner. There is no disclosure in Kumano to suggest this abutment. Also, there is no reason for this abutment to occur. White key 20 abuts with stopper 56 and black key 30 abuts with stopper 52. Figure 3 shows a cross-section of black key 30 and stopper 52. Even in an abutment between black key 30 and stopper 52, there is no disclosure for including an abutment portion in the black key to abut with stopper 52 (nor is any such abutment portion shown). Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has not cited to any abutment portion structure in black key 30 that abuts with stopper 52 and also respectfully submits that Kumano provides no such disclosure. Additionally, the Examiner has not cited to any abutment portion structure in white key 20 that abuts with stopper 56 and further respectfully submits that Kumano provides no such disclosure. In fact, Kumano merely states that white and black keys 20 and 30 each are made of synthetic resin and are “hollowed in a channel shape.” Col. 4, lines 55 – 57.

Kumano provides no further disclosure for abutment between the keys and their associated stoppers. Applicant respectfully submits that whereas Figure 2 may appear to disclose Applicant's claimed invention as argued by the Examiner, as discussed above, the Figure cannot be interpreted to disclose Applicant's invention for at least the reasons discussed above. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 – 5 are allowable over the reference to Kumano.

Further in this Amendment, Applicant has added new independent claims 6 and 8. In claim 6, Applicant also claims the same structure as in claim 1 for the abutment portion and the stopper, however, further claims that the abutment portion is formed by a plurality of ribs. Applicant also respectfully submits that Kumano does not disclose a plurality of ribs as an abutment portion. Applicant respectfully submits that this feature is clearly disclosed in Applicant's specification at least in Figures 5A, 5B, 5D, and 5E and at pages 12 - 16.

In new independent claim 8, Applicant also claims the same structure as in claim 1 for the abutment portion and the stopper, however, more particularly claims that the abutment portion is formed by at least one plate-shaped rib having a lower surface extending along a plane including lower end faces of the side walls, and coming into surface abutment with the stoppers. Applicant notes that dependent claims 2 and 3 are of similar scope. As can be seen in Figures 5C and 5F of Applicant's specification, and as explained in the specification at pages

13 – 14 and 16, the plate-shaped rib has a lower surface which extends along a plane including lower end faces of the side walls. With this structure, the load applied to the stopper is further dispersed and, therefore, the amount of deformation of the stopper can be largely reduced. Any structure in Kumano that could be interpreted as being an abutment portion is not a plate-shaped rib which has a lower surface which extends along a plane that includes the lower end faces of the side walls.

In the Office Action, in rejecting dependent claims 2 and 3, the Examiner briefly cited to Figure 2 in Kumano. If the Examiner continues to argue that dependent claims 2 – 3, and new claim 8, are not allowable over Kumano, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to particularly point out the structure in Kumano that the Examiner argues discloses these claimed features.

Lastly, in the Office Action in the Office Action Summary page, the Examiner has not acknowledged the Applicant's priority claim and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document. Applicant respectfully requests these acknowledgments in the next communication from the Examiner.

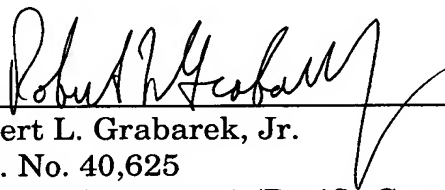
Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance with claims 1 – 10 being allowable. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any such fee or any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 056272.52748US).

Respectfully submitted,

CROWELL & MORING LLP

Dated: May 10, 2005

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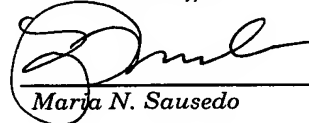
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